

did. He gave it. I won and a wonderful friendship was started. Somehow, Bernie Beck always seemed to know how to get things done, whether it was business or politics.

In the 13 years I knew Bernie, never once did he come to me to ask for something selfish. It was always something for Ft. Hood, for soldiers and their families, and for his beloved Killeen.

When I was still trying to learn where the bathrooms were in Congress, Bernie Beck and his fellow patron of Ft. Hood, Tommy Joe Mills, introduced me to the powers to be in Congress and the nooks and crannies of the Pentagon. You see, unknown to many, those two would come to D.C. every year and wine and dine key staffers, Members of Congress and Army officials at their own expense . . . well, usually at Bernie's expense. Tommy Joe's gregariousness and Bernie's quiet determination—what a combination. What Bob Hope and Bing Crosby were to entertainment, Beck and Mills were to Ft. Hood. They were an unforgettable partnership that surely only the Good Lord could have brought together . . . and we are all the better for it.

Whether it was General B.B. Bell in Europe last month or the Chief of the Staff of the Army, Rick Shinseki last week, when I met with Army leaders anywhere, they asked about Bernie Beck. They admired him, because he always cared about the Army family.

Some people get things done by shouting. That was not Bernie Beck. Some people inspire by their eloquent orations. That was not Bernie. But, when Bernie Beck spoke, often quietly, people listened and things got done. That was the measure of respect he earned from all of us blessed to know him.

I'll never forget the last time I saw Bernie Beck. It was in Killeen at our community event honoring Ft. Hood soldiers about to be deployed to Iraq. How appropriate for this World War II combat veteran who spent 4 years in Europe fighting Hitler's forces . . . 58 years later sitting quietly in the crowd, never ever forgetting those who serve our nation.

Bernie Beck understood that one day he would be saved by grace, not by good works, but he also knew that helping others was a way to carry out the great commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

Now, that day has come and Bernie Beck is blessed to be in that special place that God surely saves for those of faith who walked humbly, while making life's path better for those who follow.

May God bless his spirit, just as He blessed us by bringing Bernie Beck into this world and into our lives.

TRIBUTE TO LAKESIDE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. DENISE L. MAJETTE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Ms. MAJETTE. Mr. Speaker, On April 26, 2003, more than 1,200 students from across the United States visited Washington, DC to compete in the national finals of the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitutional program, the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution

and the Bill of Rights. Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education by act of Congress.

I am proud to announce that the class from Lakeside High School, a DeKalb County school in my district, represented the state of Georgia in this national event. These young scholars have worked conscientiously to reach the national finals by participating at local and statewide competitions. As a result of their experience they have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The 3-day We the People national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. The hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges on constitutional topics. The students are given an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge while they evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues. Their testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the judges who probe the students' depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

The We the People program provides curricular materials at upper elementary, middle, and high school levels. The curriculum not only enhances students' understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy, it also helps them identify the contemporary relevance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Critical thinking exercises, problem-solving activities, and cooperative learning techniques help develop participatory skills necessary for students to become active, responsible citizens.

Independent studies by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) revealed that students enrolled in the We the People program at upper elementary, middle, and high school levels "significantly outperformed comparison students on every topic of the tests taken." Another study by Richard Brody at Stanford University discovered that students involved in the We the People program develop greater commitment to democratic principles and values than do students using traditional textbooks and approaches. Researchers at the Council for Basic Education noted:

[T]eachers feel excited and renewed. . . . Students are enthusiastic about what they have been able to accomplish, especially in terms of their ability to carry out a reasoned argument. They have become energized about their place as citizens of the United States.

The class from Lakeside High School recently participated in the national competition in Washington, DC. It was inspiring to see these young people advocate the fundamental ideals and principles of our government, ideas that identify us as a people and bind us together as a Nation. It is important for future generations to understand these values and principles which we hold as standards in our endeavor to preserve and realize the promise of our constitutional democracy. I commend these young "constitutional experts" for reaching the We the People national finals: Teacher—Richard Barbe; Students—Jordan Bailey-Hoover, William Bretherton, Stuart Cardwell, Morgan Clemons, Matt Connors, Ann Elise Cutrer, Ross Elliott, Susan Fang, Katherine Fountain, Zack Goodman, Heather Greenfield,

Shabnam Jeddi, Erika Larson, Jonathan Lesesene, Jerel Lewis, Matt Lipkin, Cara Lynch, Courtnei Mills, Munira Mohamed, Vishal Patel, Clarence Quarterman, Ryan Rice, Caitlin Roberson, Kyle Smithers, Callan Steinmann, Karen Usselman, Karl Weidenmann, Jackie Williams, and Ethan Wu.

THE TELECOM INDUSTRY

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, the news for the Telecom industry is still not good. While there are certainly signs of recovery, there is also significant weakness in the industry.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, April 28, that capital spending by the six major telecom operators was down an average of 19 percent in the first quarter, compared to the same quarter last year. This is 19 percent lower than already low capital spending.

One reason for the lack of spending is regulatory uncertainty. The Federal Communications Commission ruled in February that some of its regulations on broadband should be eliminated. The only problem is that the FCC still has not issued its rules, so companies cannot make their capital spending plans.

Cuts in capital spending mean fewer jobs for those workers who make telecommunications equipment, and those who install it. It means less broadband availability for underserved areas. It means less competition in broadband services. The FCC needs to work to reverse these trends, and should start by issuing the order it agreed on more than 3 months ago.

TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN OF TAIWAN

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian on his third anniversary in office. Under his leadership, Taiwan is now a prosperous democracy respecting human rights and civil liberties. In addition, Taiwan and the United States enjoy a strong trade relationship. We are Taiwan's number one trading partner and Taiwan is our eighth.

With the recent outbreak of SARS, we see the absolute necessity of all countries sharing medical information. Viruses and germs know no boundaries. International cooperation and collaboration are vital in preventing the further spread of SARS. I therefore hope that Taiwan will soon gain observer status in the World Health Assembly this May. Taiwan's 23 million people deserve full access to all available information about diseases and cures.

I appreciate Taiwan's efforts in seeking a dialogue with China and maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. I hope that China will demonstrate its good will by engaging in peaceful talks with the people of Taiwan about the island's future political status.

I hope that the longstanding friendship between our two democracies continues to blossom and strengthen in the years ahead. Congratulations to the people of Taiwan and President Chen.

TRIBUTE TO PEGGY FOUKE WORTZ
ATHENA OF THE INLAND VAL-
LEYS AWARD

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside, California are exceptional. Riverside has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Peggy Fouke Wortz is one of these individuals. On Wednesday, May 21, 2003 Peggy will be awarded the ATHENA of the Inland Valleys at a lunch in her honor.

Peggy learned from a very early age the value of community service and volunteerism. She was born in Michigan and is the granddaughter of Mr. R.E. Olds, the inventor and founder of Oldsmobile cars. Throughout her childhood, her grandparents and parents demonstrated the same openhearted generosity that she would embrace in her adult life.

In 1940, Peggy married Mr. Philip B. Fouke and six years later they moved to Riverside, California where they raised three children. After the death of Mr. Fouke, Peggy married Mr. James M. Wortz in 1975 and dedicated herself to her family and community. Her involvement in the community includes service on various boards and committees as well as personal financial donations.

A few of the organizations that Peggy has been active in include: Charter Member, California Baptist University; Board of Governors, California Community Foundation; Past President, The Junior League; Founder/President The Living Desert Reserve; Board of Directors, The Mission Inn Foundation; President, Riverside Community Film; Board of Directors, Riverside Community Hospital Foundation; Founder and Board of Trustees, UCR Foundation; Founder, The Volunteer Center; Board Member, Riverside YMCA; and Founder, The Frank Millen Club.

Peggy's tireless passion for community service has contributed immensely to the betterment of the community of Riverside, California. Peggy has been the heart and soul of many community organizations and events and I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for her service and salute her as she receives the ATHENA of the Inland Valleys Award.

THE NEED FOR UNITED STATES
BANKRUPTCY COURT PRO-
CEEDINGS TO OCCUR ON A
DAILY BASIS IN BAKERSFIELD,
CALIFORNIA

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that would authorize the creation of an additional bankruptcy court for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. The legislation would also express that it is the sense of Congress that bankruptcy proceedings should be conducted in Bakersfield in Kern County, California on a daily basis.

Very simply, I am introducing this legislation because my constituents have informed me that neither they, nor justice, is well-served by the status quo, under which Bakersfield is designated as a location where court is conducted once a month, with other matters disposed of through the use of video/teleconferencing.

According to constituent attorneys familiar with both the creditor and petitioner perspectives, one particularly significant problem is the distance that parties must travel in order to personally appear in the Fresno Division of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California. Kern County encompasses a vast area, and those persons involved in contested proceedings who wish to be heard in Fresno must travel 110 miles from Bakersfield. Moreover, 429,310 of Kern County's 676,367 residents live in outlying communities and areas, and must travel much further to be heard in Fresno.

For example, those persons living in the communities of Boron, Frazier Park, or Rosamond with business before the Bankruptcy Court have to travel 172, 143, and 160 miles respectively to appear in Fresno. If those persons could appear in Bakersfield, they would only have to travel less than half as far—80, 37, and 57 miles respectively—and would be relieved of some of the hardships and costs inherent in traveling such distances. This travel is especially difficult for those parties who are sick, elderly, or have small children.

While a video/teleconferencing system is in place, I am told the system works well only approximately 70 percent of the time and that on occasion the video goes out, leaving only teleconferencing. My constituent attorneys firmly believe that appearances through the use of the video/teleconferencing system, not only decrease the decorum of the proceedings, but also decrease the parties' ability to effectively communicate, resulting in proceedings that are less efficient and fair than proceedings conducted in person before a live court and witnesses. In addition, Kern County attorneys inform me that because practitioners cannot file documents in Bakersfield, Kern County parties incur increased costs in the form of overnight or courier charges and face de facto shortened deadlines. Finally, the status quo also results in the almost automatic conduct of short proceedings via video/teleconferencing as well as the conduct of proceedings through a mixture of live and video/teleconferencing appearances, a practice which Kern County practitioners advise me

places the parties they represent at a distinct disadvantage.

A strong case exists for the daily conduct of bankruptcy proceedings in Bakersfield when one considers the number of filings submitted by Kern County parties and general demographic data. In 2002, Kern County parties made 4,168 total bankruptcy filings, and through March 31, 2003, have made 1,042 total filings. During those time periods, total filings in the entire four-county Modesto Division were 5,045 and 1,324 respectively. Moreover, Kern County's 4,168 total filings in 2002 were greater than the 3,696 total filings in Fresno County and constituted over one-third of the 11,912 total filings in the entire eight-county Fresno Division. Finally, nationwide there are approximately 700,000 people per bankruptcy court, and Kern County, one of the fastest growing areas in the nation, has a population in excess of 676,000. By comparison, Stanislaus County, where the Modesto Division is located, has a population of 468,566.

I trust that my colleagues and the appropriate United States Judicial Conference officials will recognize the need to have bankruptcy proceedings conducted in Bakersfield on a daily basis and will work with me to ensure that our legal system is structured in a manner that allows for the effective and fair administration of our bankruptcy laws.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTH-
DAY OF MARY LOUISE AKERS

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I honor a very great lady today upon reaching her 100th birthday. Mary Louis Akers, a resident of Santa Fe, New Mexico, is commemorating, with a host of family and friends, a century of life upon this earth. I salute and applaud her on this remarkable event.

Mrs. Akers was born on May 20, 1903, in Sherman, Texas, to Margaret Crumley Melton and James Henderson Melton. Growing up during the first part of the 20th century was quite different than it is today. Mary Louise Melton's father delivered mail on horseback, and the family traveled by horse and buggy most everywhere they went, not owning a car until Mary Louise was a teenager. The train was used for long trips. The family always had an "icebox," the forerunner of the refrigerator, and ice was delivered to their home every few days. Laundry was always done by hand.

Entertainment was very different when Mary Louise was young. Her primary entertainment was reading. The family did not own a radio until Mary Louise was a teenager, and the first "silent" movie she saw was a series that only ran on Saturday afternoons. Many years later, in the 1950's and after she was married, a television was purchased.

Mary Louise suffered infantile paralysis, now known as polio, when she was nine months old. The disease paralyzed her left side. Remarkably, however, she recovered from the disease and, fortunately, was left with little residual, and unnoticed, effects.

Mary Louise attended Kidd Key College in Sherman, where she studied voice. Her first